

CULTIVATION OF
PEPPERMINT PLANTA New and Profitable Industry for
Oregon.

The raising of mint is being tried on the Clatskanie deltas and the result of the trial distilling last Saturday was highly gratifying. It is claimed that in the deltas the conditions are ideal for the culture of peppermint. From the cutting of less than a quarter of an acre something like ten and one-half pounds of oil was extracted. The test has satisfied those engaged in the enterprise and the distilling of the entire crop is under way. As the industry is new in Oregon the following article by an expert is furnished us for publication:

The cultivation of peppermint, although carried on for many years in other parts of this country, is a new industry in the Pacific northwest. Owing to the peculiar climatic and soil conditions required, it is cultivated in comparatively few localities. Heretofore a large part of the world's supply of oil of peppermint has been produced in southern Michigan, northern Indiana, and a few counties of New York, where the drained swamp lands have proved particularly well adapted to peppermint culture and thousands of acres are planted to it, yielding the grower large returns.

Experiments extending over the last four years have demonstrated the adaptability of the climate of western Oregon to peppermint, and all of peppermint promises to become an important product of this section in the very near future.

Peppermint requires, for the production of a profitable crop, a rich, moist, far-reaching soil—a soil that holds the moisture well up into the summer, and does not "bake." Low bottom lands, muck, "beaver-dam"



FORT CANBY LIGHTHOUSE AT THE NORTH ENTRANCE TO COLUMBIA RIVER

and sub-irrigated lands are best adapted to it.

Peppermint is grown from roots not more than one year old. That is, roots grown from this year's planting are suitable for re-planting next spring. The roots increase very rapidly and an acre planted in one season will supply enough roots to plant fifteen or twenty acres the following season.

The ground should be marked out one way only in furrows three feet apart and about four inches deep. The roots are then planted in a continuous string, the planter carrying them in a sack slung from his shoulder, and covering the roots with his feet as he drops them. They should be covered about 1 1/4 to 2 inches deep. Planting should be done in March or April.

Cultivation should commence as soon as weeds appear and should continue up to about July 1. It is important to keep the crop free from weeds up to the time of harvesting, so that it will remain clean the second and third years, when it need

not be cultivated. Peppermint can be cut for at least four years from one planting, after which it may be desirable to rotate for a year with some other crop. It yields a full crop the first year. After the first year, the roots will cover the entire ground and it is frequently cut the second and following years without any cultivation whatever. But the better way is to plow it under early in the spring, plowing about eight inches deep and harrow a few times with a light harrow.

The crop will mature the first year from about August 16 to September 1, and after the first year, two or three weeks earlier. The first year it grows in the rows only, and is usually cut with a scythe, to avoid waste. After the first year it grows up over the entire ground and is cut with an ordinary mower. It is dried, raked and cocked the same as hay, and hauled direct to the distillery where the oil is extracted by a very simple process of distillation. A still, with sufficient capacity to handle up to fifty acres, can be constructed at

a cost of about \$300, or of smaller capacity for even less.

Good land, adapted to peppermint, should yield from forty to seventy pounds of oil per acre. Fifty pounds is not at all unusual, and yields have been known as high as eighty pounds per acre.

Analysis shows the Oregon oil of peppermint to be much higher in menthol content than any other oil produced in the world. Both in menthol and in flavor it is superior even to the English oil, and finds a ready market wherever it is known.

Wild peppermint, while botanically of the same species as the domesticated peppermint, it carries a very small quantity of oil, and not sufficient to be profitable. The peppermint of commerce is of the English Mitcham variety, having been imported to this country some years ago.

Peppermint oil is a staple commodity. The market price in recent years has varied all the way from \$1.25 to \$5 per pound to the grower. According to a government bulletin on the subject, the average wholesale price for the last forty years has been \$2.50 per pound.

Peppermint hay, after the oil has been extracted, makes suitable feed for cattle and horses, and is always saved and fed wherever peppermint is grown.

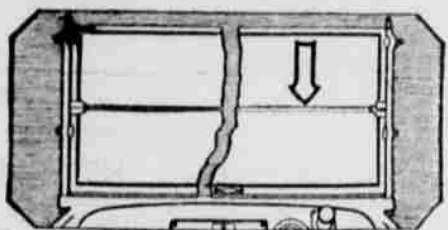
Make hay while the sun shines, but put some of it in the barn. Be frugal as well as industrious.

You have read, you have heard, you have thought—but what have you done?

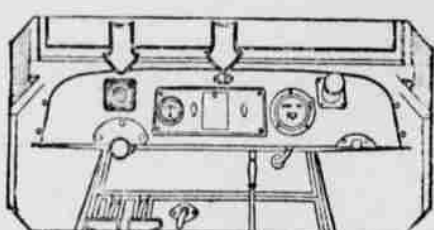
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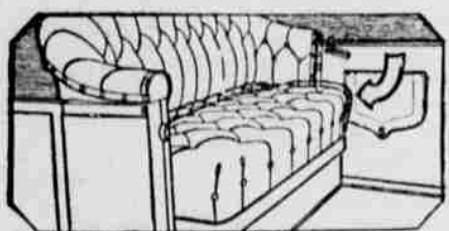
4 New Refinements



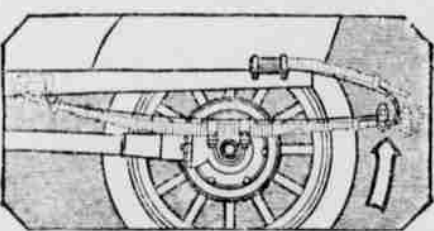
Arrow points to new and improved windshield. Upper half overlaps lower half. Absolutely rain-tight.



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Arrow shows old and new spring construction. New springs much longer and more flexible.

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